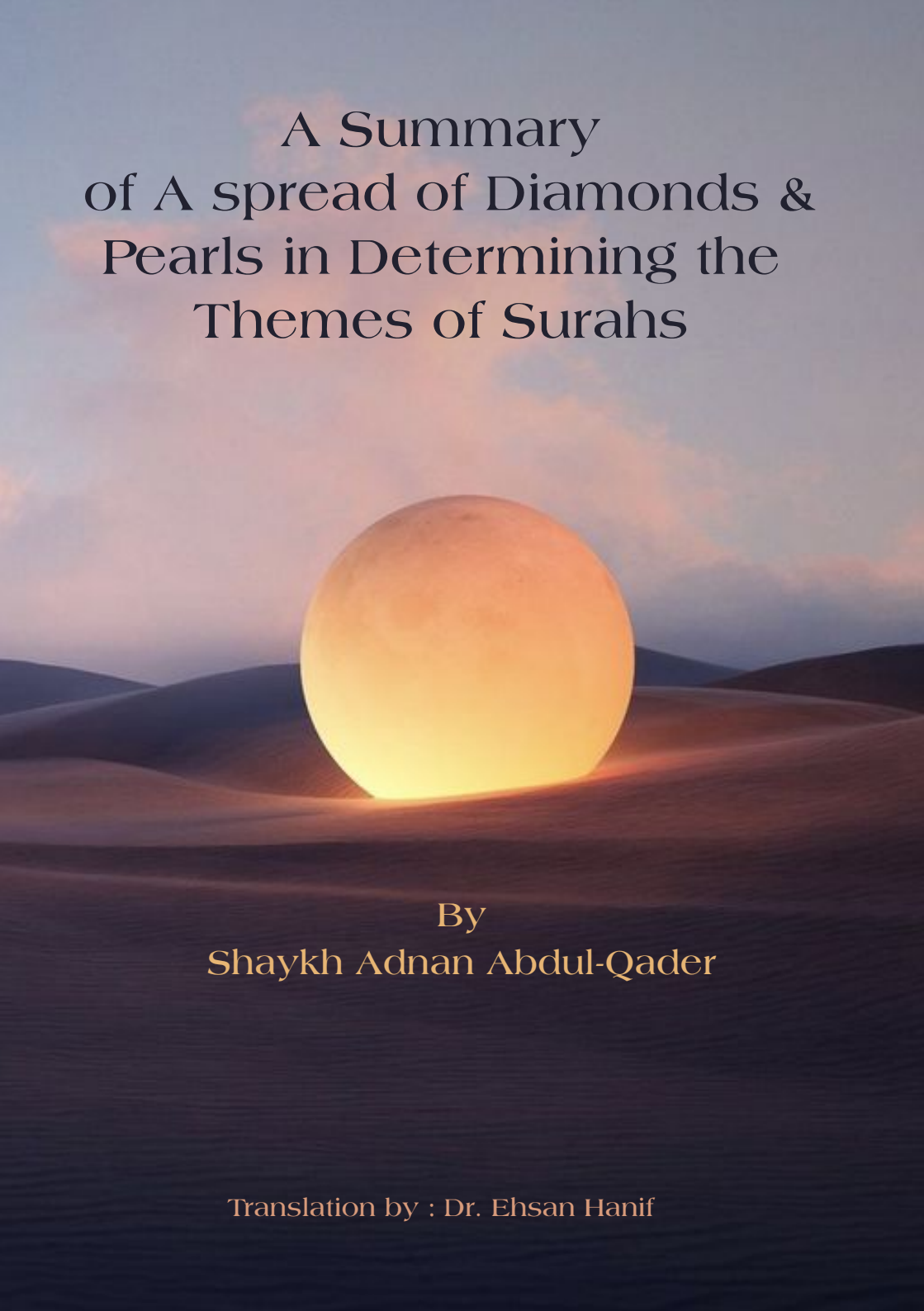
A Summary of A spread of Diamonds & Pearls in Determining the Themes of Surahs



By
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المختصر من نثر

الماس و الدرر

فى طرق البحث عن مقاصد السور

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by

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

The Common Theme Found at the Beginning... 9

Repetitive Words or Phrases in the *Sūrah* 17

The Uniqueness of the *Sūrah* 31

The Final Verses Found at the End of the Previous *Sūrah* 45

The Name of the *Sūrah* 55

The Theme of the *Sūrah* is Clear 67

Bibliography 77

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His aid and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of ourselves and our actions. Whosoever is guided by Allah cannot be misguided by another, and whosoever is misguided by Allah cannot be guided by any other. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, without partner, and I testify that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger.

To proceed:

Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān narrated, "I prayed behind the Prophet (ﷺ) in the night prayer and he began to recite *Al-Baqarah*. I thought to myself that he would go into *rukū'* after a hundred verses but he continued to recite. I then thought he would complete the *sūrah* in two *rak'ahs* but he continued to recite. I next thought that he would make *rukū'* after completing the *sūrah* but he then began to recite *Al-Nisā'* and completed it, and then he began *Āl-'Imrān* and completed it. He would recite in a calm, measured way."[1]

1 *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim*

When a Muslim reads this *ḥadīth*, questions enter his mind; what caused the Prophet (ﷺ) to recite each chapter in a measured way and not to go into *rukū‘* until he completed each one? In another narration it is reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) would recite a complete chapter in each *rak‘ah*.[2]

Why did the Prophet (ﷺ) not go into *rukū‘* after half the *sūrah* or after reciting its opening passage as many *imāms* do today?

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, "From the great benefits of this approach is that the speech being read is all connected. Thus, the opening of the recitation is with that which Allah opened with and the conclusion is with that which Allah concluded with, and thus completing the theme and objective of each chapter."[3]

Therefore, the answer to the above question is from two interrelated angles:

1. Completing the theme of each *sūrah*.
2. Connecting the verses to one another.

Firstly: Completing the theme of each *sūrah*.

Each *sūrah* of the Glorious Qur'ān deals with a single theme, and the verses of the *sūrah* complement one another in dealing with all the aspects of this theme. Those who commented on this include Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Aḥmad ibn al-Zubayr al-Garnāṭī in the seventh century, Al-Biqā‘ī in the ninth century and Sayyid Quṭb in the fourteenth century as well as others.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728 AH) spoke about this

2 *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*

3 *Majmū al-Fatāwā*, vol. 13, p. 414

in various places. An example of this is what is found in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, "*Sūrah al-Baqarah* comprises of the fundamentals of knowledge and the principles of the religion." [4] He also said, "Ponder over how the Qur'ān is complimentary and how parts of it connect to other parts." [5] He further said, "*Sūrah Nūn* is a *sūrah* dedicated to the character, which is the essence of the religion with which Allah sent Muḥammad (ﷺ). Allah says, 'And indeed you are upon an exalted character'. [Qalam: 4]" [6] In another place, he said, "He concludes by mentioning patience which is the essence of good character, as He says, 'Be patient with the command of your Lord'. [Qalam: 48]" [7]

Aḥmad ibn al-Zubayr al-Garnāṭī (627-708 AH) authored a single volume book entitled, *Al-Burhān fī Tartīb Suwar al-Qur'ān*, in which he speaks about the relationship between the different *sūrahs*. He highlights the link between every *sūrah* with the previous and forthcoming *sūrahs*. Within this and at times, he also speaks about the objectives of the *sūrahs*.

Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī (d. 885 AH) authored a work of *tafsīr* entitled, *Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsub al-Āyāt wal-Suwar*, published in eight volumes. Within this book, he expanded on the previous efforts of al-Garnāṭī and al-Ḥarālī in speaking about the relevance of verses in relation to one another as well as the links between the various *sūrahs*. He also mentioned the objectives and themes of the *sūrahs* according to his own studies and efforts.

As for Sayyid Quṭb, he was fond of explaining the themes and origins of each *sūrah* before continuing on with their explanation within his book, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*.

4 Ibid, vol. 14, p. 41.

5 Ibid, vol. 14, p. 46

6 Ibid, vol. 16, p. 61

7 Ibid, vol. 16, p. 70

Secondly: Connecting the verses to one another.

Each verse of the *sūrah* will connect to the verses before and after it, i.e. there is a relationship between them. This science is known as the Science of Inter-Relation [*'Ilm al-Munāsabah*], and it is a noble science. Whosoever studies it and reflects upon it, will find a great door opening before them which leads to finding many of the hidden secrets of the Qur'ān.

A number of scholars hinted at this science, such as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah as has preceded. In addition to him others who alluded to it include Ibn al-'Arabī al-Mālikī, al-Fakhar al-Rāzī, al-Zarkashī, al-Biqā'ī, al-Suyūṭī and others.

Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī said in *Sirāj al-Murīdīn*, "The verses of the Qur'ān connect to one another until they are like a single word, joined in meaning and orderly in structure. This is a great science which has not been explored except by one scholar who applied it in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*. Allah then guided me to it."[8]

Shaykh Abul-Ḥasan al-Shahrābānī said, "The first person to speak about the Science of Inter-Relation in Baghdad - and we had not heard this from anyone other than him - was the Shaykh, the *imam*, Abū Bakr al-Naysābūrī. He was extremely knowledgeable in the *sharī'ah* and in poetry."[9]

Al-Rāzī said concerning *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, "Whosoever contemplates over the intricate structure of this *sūrah* and its amazing arrangement, will realise that just as the Qur'ān is a miracle in the eloquence of its words and the nobility of its meanings, it is also a miracle as a result of the structure and arrangement of its verses."[10]

8 *Al- Burhān lil-Zarkashī* vol. 1, p. 36.

9 Ibid.

10 *Al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 138.

Al-Zarkashī said, "Know that the Science of Inter-Relation is a noble science which challenges the intellect and with which you can measure the statement of the speaker. The exegetes have not paid much attention to it due to its precise nature, but someone who did focus on it was Fakhar al-Dīn al-Rāzī who said in his exegesis, 'Most of the hidden meanings of the Qur'ān are found in the arrangement of verses and their links.' Other scholars said, 'From the beauty of speech is that it is connected and not disjointed. This type of *tafsīr* is neglected by some or many exegetes, but its benefits are many.'" [11]

Muḥammad Darrāz said whilst speaking about reciting a single *sūrah* of the Qur'ān, "Let your imagination travel with it stage by stage, and then return your sight back to it once again, how did it begin and end? How have its parts met and changed? How have its pillars strengthened each other? How has the start conformed to the final results and how has the beginning complimented the ending? I further guarantee that you will never find through its meanings or structure that which will allow you to know whether a particular *sūrah* was revealed in its entirety or dispersed over intervals. You will be lead to believe that the seven longest *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān, were revealed together in their entirety, until you learn from history that they were in fact revealed over a long period of time. You continue to go through the parts [of a single *sūrah*] as though they are blocks and portions of a single building all constructed at the same time. You do not feel that there is any disparity in the flow or rhythm, or that it is disjointed when moving from one part to another, but you see in its various parts complete tranquillity, just as within the different parts of a single entity, you see unity and harmony."[12]

He further said in summarising the statement of al-Shāṭibī in *Al-*

11 *Al- Burhān* vol. 1, pp. 35-36.

12 *Al-Naba' al-Aẓīm*, pp. 154-155.

Muwāfaqāt, "Historically the scholars have said that a *sūrah*, despite the many topics found within it, is speech which is connected from the beginning to the end, and from the end to the beginning. It is generally directed towards a single theme, just as its different parts are all related to the same theme. The one looking for the theme of a *sūrah* must look at all the *sūrah* in its entirety as well as all its different topics."[13]

For this reason, the heart of the Muslim yearns to learn the theme of each *sūrah* so that it becomes easier for them to connect to the verses, thus enabling an appreciation of the central theme from all its various angles. The greatness of the Qur'an then becomes more apparent, a greater sweetness is experienced and its hidden meanings become clearer. This realisation leads a Muslim to fall down in prostration at the greatness of the Qur'an, and he praises Allah for honouring this nation with this Noble Book; a Book which the most eloquent, educated and powerful of Arabs could not produce a single *sūrah* like it. They too fell in prostration by the Ka'bah due to one *sūrah* - *Sūrah al-Najm*. Even their eloquent leader, Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah could not stop himself from praising it when he admitted, "There is a sweetness in it and a charm to it, its heights bear fruit and its depths are rich. Indeed, it is exalted, cannot be overpowered and it destroys all else."

How then do we reach the theme of each *sūrah*?

I have attempted to gather all the various ways one can use to reach the themes of the *sūrahs* of the Qur'an, and found it to be a treasure full of diamonds and pearls. I longed to share these treasures with others who also love the Book of Allah, the Most High.

13 Ibid, p. 159

This treatise is then a summary of its original out of fear of burdening the reader. I have named it, *A Summary of A Spread of Diamonds & Pearls in Determining the Themes of Sūrahs.*

The methods of attaining the themes of a *sūrah* can be summarised in the following:

1. The common theme found at the beginning and end of the *sūrah*
2. Words or phrases which are repeated in the *sūrah*
3. The uniqueness of the *sūrah*
4. The final verses found at the end of the previous *sūrah*
5. The name of the *sūrah*
6. The theme of the *sūrah* is clear

May the salutations and blessings of Allah be upon His slave and Messenger Muḥammad and upon his family. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all that exists.

Written by

‘Adnān ‘Abdul-Qādir

Kuwait – Rabī‘ al-Ākhir, 1424 AH

Chapter One

The Common Theme Found at the Beginning & End of the *Sūrah*

Read the beginning and end of a *sūrah*; for example, the first and last fifteen verses of a *sūrah*. The recurring theme found within the opening and ending passages will most likely be the theme of the *sūrah*. This can be further clarified with the following examples:

Sūrah al-Baqarah

It begins with the saying of the Most High,

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقۡنَٰهُمۡ يُنفِقُونَ ٣﴾

"Who believe in the unseen, keep up the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them."[14]

14 *Al-Baqarah*: 3

The *sūrah* ends with the verse,

﴿ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ﴾

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. They all believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers."[15]

From this we see that the theme is belief in Allah alone, i.e. to single out Allah in worship and love.

Sūrah al-Nisā'

This chapter begins with,

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفۡسٖ وَٰحِدَةٖ وَخَلَقَ مِنۡهَا زَوۡجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنۡهُمَا رِجَالٗا كَثِيرٗا وَنِسَآءٗۚ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِي تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهِۦ وَٱلۡأَرۡحَامَۚ﴾

"O people! Be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul (Adam), and from it He created his spouse, and from them both He created many men and women, and be mindful of Allah in whose name you make requests of one another. Beware of severing the ties of kinship."[16]

Allah then goes on to mention how we should interact with the orphans and our spouses, as well as issues of inheritance pertaining to parents, children and siblings.

At the end of the *sūrah*, Allah says,

15 *Al-Baqarah*: 285.

16 *Al-Nisā'*: 1.

﴿يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي ٱلْكَلَٰلَةِ ۚ إِنِ ٱمْرُؤٌا۟ هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُۥٓ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ ۚ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَآ إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهَا وَلَدٌ ۚ﴾

"They ask you for a legal verdict. Say: "Allah directs about Al-Kalālah (those who leave neither descendants nor ascendants as heirs). If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister, but no child, she shall have half the inheritance. If [it is a woman], who left no child, her brother is sole heir."[17]

Thus, the common theme is the strong bond and relationship between parents, children and siblings. Indeed, all of humanity is one family having the same forefather which should then necessitate good character and conduct towards one another. *Sūrah al-Nisā'* speaks about the third foundation upon which our nation stands and with which a person tastes the sweetness of *īmān*; the harmony, strong bond and love which should exist in a Muslim society.

Sūrah al-Anbiyā'

The *sūrah* begins with the verse,

﴿ٱقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ ۝١﴾

"Ever closer to people draws their reckoning, while they turn away in heedlessness."[18]

The *sūrah* ends with,

17 *Al-Nisā'*: 176.

18 *Al-Anbiyā'*: 1.

﴿حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فُتِحَتۡ يَأۡجُوجُ وَمَأۡجُوجُ وَهُم مِّن كُلِّ حَدَبٖ يَنسِلُونَ ٩٦ وَٱقۡتَرَبَ ٱلۡوَعۡدُ ٱلۡحَقُّ﴾

"And when the people of Gog and Magog are let loose, and they swiftly swarm from every highland. When the True Promise draws near..."[19]

Allah then says after this,

﴿يَوۡمَ نَطۡوِي ٱلسَّمَآءَ كَطَيِّ ٱلسِّجِلِّ لِلۡكُتُبِۚ كَمَا بَدَأۡنَآ أَوَّلَ خَلۡقٖ نُّعِيدُهُۥۚ﴾

"On that Day when We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books. We shall reproduce creation just as We produced it the first time."[20]

Therefore, we see that the recurring theme found at the beginning and the end of the *sūrah* is the Hour and resurrection.

Sūrah Maryam

This *sūrah* begins with the story of Zakariyyā in which Allah says,

﴿ذِكۡرُ رَحۡمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبۡدَهُۥ زَكَرِيَّآ ٢﴾

"(This is) an account of your Lord's mercy to His slave, Zakariyyā."[21]

Following this is the verse,

19 *Al-Anbiyā'*: 96-97

20 *Al-Anbiyā'*: 104

21 *Maryam*: 2

﴿إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَٰمٍ ٱسْمُهُۥ يَحْيَىٰ﴾

"We bring you good news of a son, whose name will be Yaḥyā."[22]

The chapter then ends with,

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِۦ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾﴾

"Indeed, those who have faith and work deeds of righteousness, the Most Beneficent will bestow love for them. We have made this easy in your own language, so that you may give glad tidings to the righteous, and warnings to a stubborn people."[23]

This then shows us that the theme here is the mercy of Allah towards the believers through the glad tidings He sends to them at times of trial and hardship.

Sūrah al-Mu'minūn

It begins with the saying of Allah, the Most High,

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ فِى صَلَاتِهِمْ خَٰشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾

"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who are during their prayers humbly submissive."[24]

It ends with the saying of Allah, the Most High,

22 *Maryam*: 7

23 *Maryam*: 96-97

24 *Mu'minūn*: 1-2

﴿إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ ٱلْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوٓا۟ أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ ٱلْفَآئِزُونَ ١١١﴾

"Verily! I have rewarded them this Day for their patience, it is they who will succeed."[25]

Allah then says,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ١١٧﴾

"Surely! The disbelievers will never be successful."[26]

The common theme therefore is the success and victory of the believers in this life and the next, as well as the loss and destruction of the disbelievers in both worlds.

Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ

The chapter begins with,

﴿إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْىِۦ نِسَآءَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ٤ وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتُضْعِفُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِينَ ٥ وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَنُرِىَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَٰمَٰنَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَحْذَرُونَ ٦﴾

"Verily, Pharaoh made himself exalted in the land and divided the people into different groups: one group he oppresses slaughtering their sons and sparing their women – he was one of those who spread

25 *Mu'minūn*: 111

26 *Mu'minūn*: 117

corruption. But We wished to favour those who were oppressed in that land, to make them leaders, the ones to survive, to establish them in the land, and through them show Pharaoh, Haman, and their armies the very thing they feared."[27]

The chapter ends with the story of Qārūn and then the statement of Allah,

﴿تِلْكَ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۚ وَٱلْعَٰقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾﴾

"We grant the home in the Hereafter to those who do not seek superiority one earth or spread corruption the good ending is awarded to those who are mindful of God."[28]

Therefore, the recurring theme is the power and establishment upon the earth of the pious believers who return to Allah and seek protection in Him, as well as the failure, humiliation and loss of the evil oppressors.

Sūrah al-Rūm

The *sūrah* begins with,

﴿الٓمٓ ﴿١﴾ غُلِبَتِ ٱلرُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ فِىٓ أَدْنَى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَهُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾ فِى بِضْعِ سِنِينَ ۗ لِلَّهِ ٱلْأَمْرُ مِن قَبْلُ وَمِنۢ بَعْدُ ۚ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾ بِنَصْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ يَنصُرُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَعْدَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ لَا يُخْلِفُ ٱللَّهُ وَعْدَهُۥ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾﴾

"Alif-Lām-Mīm. The Byzantines have been defeated. In a nearby land. They will reverse their defeat with a victory. In a few years and

27 *Al-Qaṣaṣ*: 4-6

28 *Al-Qaṣaṣ*: 83

they, Allah is in command, first and last. On that day, the believers will rejoice. At God's help. He helps whoever He pleases: He is the Mighty, the Merciful. This is Allah's promise: Allah never breaks His promise, but most people do not know."[29]

The last verse of the *sūrah* is,

﴿فَٱصۡبِرۡ إِنَّ وَعۡدَ ٱللَّهِ حَقّٞۖ وَلَا يَسۡتَخِفَّنَّكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ٦٠﴾

"So be patient. Verily, the Promise of Allah is true, do not let those with no firm beliefs discourage you."[30]

Thus, the common theme found at the beginning and the end of this chapter is the promise of Allah. The theme then is the realisation of the promise of Allah which is inevitable and will never be broken.

29 *Al-Rūm*: 1-6

30 *Al-Rūm*: 60

Chapter Two
Repetitive Words or Phrases in the *Sūrah*

At times, you find certain words which recurr at the beginning, middle and end of a *sūrah*. At other times, a number of words or verses are repeated. When you look at and ponder over this, you find that it points to the theme of the *sūrah*. Examples of this are as follows:

Sūrah al-Mā'idah

Various derivatives of the word 'covenant/pledges' are repeated, and different types of covenants, pledges and contracts are mentioned.

For example,

﴿وَٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَةَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَمِيثَٰقَهُ ٱلَّذِي وَاثَقَكُم بِهِۦٓ﴾

"And remember Allah's Favour upon you and the pledge with which He bound you."[31]

And,

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ ٱللَّهُ مِيثَٰقَ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ﴾

"Indeed Allah took the pledge from the Children of Israel..."[32]

Allah says concerning the Jews,

﴿فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَٰقَهُمْ لَعَنَّٰهُمْ﴾

"So because broke their pledge, We cursed them..."[33]

And He says concerning the Christians,

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّا نَصَٰرَىٰٓ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَهُمْ﴾

"And We also took a pledge from those who say, 'We are Christians'"[34]

Other types of contracts mentioned are oaths, legacies, *iḥrām* and the covenants taken from the disciples concerning the Table Spread. Thus, this is a chapter about the covenants and pledges that Allah took from the Children of Adam and will then hold them to account for. This accounting includes even the prophets such as ʿĪsā,

31 *Al-Mā'idah*: 7

32 *Al-Mā'idah*: 12

33 *Al-Mā'idah*: 13

34 *Al-Mā'idah*: 14

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ ٱتَّخِذُونِى وَأُمِّىَ إِلَٰهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ﴾

"Did you say to people: 'Take me and my mother as two gods alongside Allah?'"[35]

Sūrah al-A'rāf

You will often find the word 'message'[36] and its derivatives mentioned in this chapter.

Allah says,

﴿فَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝٦﴾

"Then surely, We shall question those to whom it was sent and verily, We shall question the Messengers."[37]

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا﴾

"Indeed, We sent Nūḥ..."[38]

﴿وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا فِى قَرْيَةٍ﴾

35 *Al-Mā'idah*: 116.

36 Translators Note: In Arabic, the word for message is '*risālah*', and from its derivatives we have words like sent [*arsala*] and messenger [*rasūl*]. It is the Arabic root word that the author is referring to as being reccurring in this *surah*.

37 *Al-A'rāf*: 6.

38 *Al-A'rāf*: 59.

"Whenever We sent a Prophet to a town..."[39]

﴿فَأَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلطُّوفَانَ﴾

"So We let loose on them the flood..."[40]

﴿فَأَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ رِجۡزًا﴾

"So We sent on them a torment..."[41]

﴿وَلَنُرۡسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ١٣٤﴾

"...and we shall send the Children of Israel with you."[42]

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِي يُرۡسِلُ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ بُشۡرَۢا﴾

"And it is He Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings..."[43]

﴿فَأَرۡسِلۡ مَعِيَ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ١٠٥﴾

"So send the Children of Israel along with me."[44]

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39 *Al-A'rāf*: 94

40 *Al-A'rāf*: 133

41 *Al-A'rāf*: 162

42 *Al-A'rāf*: 134

43 *Al-A'rāf*: 57

44 *Al-A'rāf*: 105

﴿أَرۡجِهۡ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرۡسِلۡ فِي ٱلۡمَدَآئِنِ﴾

"Delay him and his brother for a while, and send callers to the cities..."[45]

﴿إِنَّا بِمَآ أُرۡسِلَ بِهِۦ مُؤۡمِنُونَ ٧٥﴾

"We believe in the message sent through him."[46]

﴿ءَامَنُواْ بِٱلَّذِيٓ أُرۡسِلۡتُ بِهِۦ وَطَآئِفَةٞ لَّمۡ يُؤۡمِنُواْ﴾

"...a party of you who believes in that with which I have been sent and a party who do not believe..."[47]

Nūḥ and Hūd both said,

﴿وَلَٰكِنِّي رَسُولٞ مِّن رَّبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٦١﴾

"...but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all that exists."[48]

Mūsā said,

﴿إِنِّي رَسُولٞ مِّن رَّبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ١٠٤﴾

45 *Al-A'rāf*: 111

46 *Al-A'rāf*: 75

47 *Al-A'rāf*: 87

48 *Al-A'rāf*: 61/67

"I am a Messenger from the Lord of all that exists."[49]

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلرَّسُولَ ٱلنَّبِيَّ ٱلْأُمِّيَّ﴾

"Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who is unlettered..."[50]

﴿إِنِّي رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا﴾

"Verily, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all..."[51]

﴿فَـَٔامِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ٱلنَّبِيِّ ٱلْأُمِّيِّ﴾

"So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet who is unlettered..."[52]

﴿إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ﴾

"If there come to you Messengers from amongst you..."[53]

﴿لَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِٱلْحَقِّ﴾

"Indeed, the Messengers of our Lord did come with the truth."[54]

49 *Al-A'rāf*: 104.

50 *Al-A'rāf*: 157.

51 *Al-A'rāf*: 158.

52 *Al-A'rāf*: 158.

53 *Al-A'rāf*: 35.

54 *Al-A'rāf*: 43.

﴿حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَتۡهُمۡ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوۡنَهُمۡ﴾

"...until, when Our Messengers come to them to take their souls..."[55]

﴿وَلَقَدۡ جَآءَتۡهُمۡ رُسُلُهُم بِٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ﴾

"And there came indeed to them their Messengers with clear proofs"[56]

﴿لَقَدۡ أَبۡلَغۡتُكُمۡ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي ٧٩﴾

"I have indeed conveyed to you the Message of my Lord..."[57]

﴿أُبَلِّغُكُمۡ رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّي﴾

"I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord..."[58]

﴿لَقَدۡ أَبۡلَغۡتُكُمۡ رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّي﴾

"I have indeed conveyed my Lord's Messages unto you..."[59]

﴿إِنِّي ٱصۡطَفَيۡتُكَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ بِرِسَٰلَٰتِي وَبِكَلَٰمِي﴾

55 *Al-A'rāf*: 37.

56 *Al-A'rāf*: 101.

57 *Al-A'rāf*: 79.

58 *Al-A'rāf*: 62.

59 *Al-A'rāf*: 93.

"...I have chosen you above men by My Messages, and by My speaking..."[60]

﴿إِنَّا بِمَآ أُرۡسِلَ بِهِۦ مُؤۡمِنُونَ ٧٥﴾

"Do you know that Ṣāliḥ is one sent from his Lord."[61]

﴿إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُرۡسَلِينَ ٧٧﴾

"...if you are indeed one of the Messengers."[62]

A number of derivatives of the word 'message' have been mentioned:

'We sent' [verses 59, 94, 133, 162],

'We will send' [verse 134],

'He sends' [verse 57],

'was sent' [verses 105, 111],

'were sent' [verse 87],

'messenger' [verses 61, 67, 104, 157, 158],

'messengers' [verses 35, 43, 53],

'our messengers' [verse 37],

'their messengers' [verse 101],

60 *Al-A'rāf*: 144.

61 *Al-A'rāf*: 75.

62 *Al-A'rāf*: 77.

‘message’ [verse 79],

‘messages’ [verses 62, 68, 93, 144],

‘the one sent’ [verse 75]

and ‘those sent’ [verses 6, 75].

Thus, the *sūrah* speaks about the message sent to warn people and give the believers glad tidings. As such, the messenger is a warner,

﴿فَلَا يَكُن فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِۦ﴾

“...let there be no anxiety in your heart because of it – so that you may use it to give warning and to remind the believers.”[63]

Likewise, we see the statements of Nūḥ and Hūd,

﴿أَوَعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَآءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ﴾

“Do you find it so strange that a message should come from your Lord – through a man in your midst – to warn you...”[64]

﴿إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾﴾

“He is but a plain warner.”[65]

63 *Al-A‘rāf*: 2.

64 *Al-A‘rāf*: 63/69.

65 *Al-A‘rāf*: 184.

﴿إِنۡ أَنَا۠ إِلَّا نَذِيرٞ وَبَشِيرٞ لِّقَوۡمٖ يُؤۡمِنُونَ ١٨٨﴾

"I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe."[66]

The theme is all about the message: What is the message of the messengers? Why were they sent? What is the reward of their followers? What is the punishment of their opponents? What different phases will the Prophet (ﷺ) go through with Quraysh? How will the Prophet (ﷺ) deal with these challenges?

Sūrah Maryam

We find within this *sūrah* the repetition of the name *al-Raḥmān* [the Most Beneficent] and the word *raḥmah* [mercy]. The name *al-Raḥmān* is repeated sixteen times, this number of repetition is not found in any other *sūrah*. The word '*raḥmah*' in its various forms is repeated four times:

﴿ذِكۡرُ رَحۡمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبۡدَهُۥ زَكَرِيَّآ ٢﴾

"(This is) an account of your Lord's mercy to His slave, Zakariyyā."[67]

Likewise, in the story of Maryam,

﴿وَرَحۡمَةٗ مِّنَّا﴾

66 *Al-A'rāf*: 188

67 *Maryam*: 2

"...and a mercy from Us."[68]

Similarly, in the story of Ibrāhīm,

﴿وَوَهَبۡنَا لَهُم مِّن رَّحۡمَتِنَا﴾

"And We granted them of Our Mercy..."[69]

Finally, in the story of Mūsā,

﴿وَوَهَبۡنَا لَهُم مِّن رَّحۡمَتِنَا﴾

"And We granted to him of Our Mercy..."[70]

All of this shows the complete mercy of Allah towards the believers and especially in times of trial.

Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt

You will find within this chapter the following verses repeated,

﴿إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجۡزِي ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ ١٢١﴾

"This is how We reward those who do good."[71]

68 *Maryam*: 21
69 *Maryam*: 50
70 *Maryam*: 53
71 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 121

﴿إِنَّهُۥ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨١﴾﴾

"He was truly one of Our faithful servants."[72]

﴿إِلَّا عِبَادَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾﴾

"Except the chosen servants of Allah."[73]

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰ نُوحٍ فِى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾﴾

"Peace be upon Nūḥ among all the nations."[74]

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ﴿١٠٩﴾﴾

"Peace be upon Ibrāhīm."[75]

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾﴾

"Peace be upon Mūsā and Hārūn."[76]

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰٓ إِلْ يَاسِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾﴾

72 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 81
73 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 128
74 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 79
75 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 109
76 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 120

"Peace be upon Ilyāsīn."[77]

Hence, you gleam from this the station of those protected by Allah beginning with the angels,

﴿وَٱلصَّٰٓفَّٰتِ صَفّٗا ١﴾

"By those (angels) ranged in ranks."[78]

Then the believers and their outcome,

﴿إِلَّا عِبَادَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلۡمُخۡلَصِينَ ٤٠ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمۡ رِزۡقٞ مَّعۡلُومٞ ٤١﴾

"Not so the chosen servants of Allah. They will have familiar provisions."[79]

Allah then specifically mentions His prophets, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm and Mūsā, and how He saved them from the plots of their people and from the hardships they encountered,

﴿وَلَقَدۡ سَبَقَتۡ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا ٱلۡمُرۡسَلِينَ ١٧١ إِنَّهُمۡ لَهُمُ ٱلۡمَنصُورُونَ ١٧٢ وَإِنَّ جُندَنَا لَهُمُ ٱلۡغَٰلِبُونَ ١٧٣ فَتَوَلَّ عَنۡهُمۡ حَتَّىٰ حِينٖ ١٧٤﴾

"And, indeed, Our Word has already been given to Our servants, the Messengers. It is they who will be helped. And that Our armies will be the victors. So turn away from them for a while."[80]

77 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 130
78 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 1
79 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 40-41
80 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 171-174

It then concludes with the saying of Allah,

﴿وَسَلَٰمٌ عَلَى ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ١٨١﴾

"And peace be on the Messengers."[81]

81 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 181.

Chapter Three
The Uniqueness of the *Sūrah*

This is where the *sūrah* has something unique and different about it. It could be in a verse, or a phrase, or an extra word or the order of words within a verse which is not found in the other *sūrahs* which contain the same verse. When you notice this, it often leads you to the theme of the *sūrah*.

For example:

Sūrah al-A'rāf

There are certain verses which are mentioned in this *sūrah* that are different from those found in other *sūrahs*. An example of this is the statement of the advisors of Pharaoh,

﴿وَأَرۡسِلۡ فِي ٱلۡمَدَآئِنِ حَٰشِرِينَ ١١١﴾

"...and send callers to all the cities."[82]

Whereas in *Sūrah al-Shu'arā'* you find,

﴿وَٱبۡعَثۡ فِي ٱلۡمَدَآئِنِ حَٰشِرِينَ ٣٦﴾

"and dispatch callers to the cities."[83]

This chapter then is different from *Sūrah al-Shu'arā'* in that it uses '*arsil*' as opposed to '*ib'ath*'.

Similarly, in the saying of Allah about the Children of Israel,

﴿فَبَدَّلَ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنۡهُمۡ قَوۡلًا غَيۡرَ ٱلَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمۡ فَأَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ رِجۡزٗا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَظۡلِمُونَ ١٦٢﴾

"But the wrongdoers among them substituted another saying for that which had been given them, so We sent them a punishment from heaven for their wrongdoing."[84]

Whereas in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* we have the word 'descended upon them'[85] as opposed to 'sent'.

This is why Allah says in *Sūrah al-A'rāf*,

﴿فَأَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ رِجۡزٗا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ ١٦٢﴾

82 *Al-A'raf*: 111

83 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 36

84 *Al-A'raf*: 162

85 *Al-Baqarah*: 59

"So We sent on them a punishment from heaven...";

due to the theme of the chapter being about the Message as has already been explained in the previous section.

Sūrah al-Ḥijr

The story of Lūṭ is mentioned in this *sūrah* as it is mentioned in other places, such as *Sūrahs al-A'rāf*, *al-Shu'arā'*, *al-'Ankabūt*, *al-Ṣāffāt* and others. However, in *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* there is an extra phrase not found in those other chapters,

﴿وَٱتَّبِعۡ أَدۡبَٰرَهُمۡ﴾

"...and walk behind them..."[86]

Why should a father walk behind his daughters? Why should he be behind them? When walking down the streets or in a mall, does a father walk ahead of his daughters and leave them behind him to be possibly harassed by young men? Or does he walk behind them keeping a hawk's eye on them so that they will not be harassed by others? Obviously, he walks behind them to protect them.

Thus, the theme of *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* is protection and preservation.

If you were to follow this chapter from the beginning to the end, you would find protection mentioned clearly within it.

The *sūrah* begins with,

﴿تِلۡكَ ءَايَٰتُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَقُرۡءَانٖ مُّبِينٖ ١﴾

86 *Al-Ḥijr*: 65

"These are the Verses of the Book, and a Qur'an that makes things clear."[87]

A book refers to something written, and normally something is written to preserve the information it contains, either as proof for or against the author, such as a loan agreement.

At times the word 'book' refers to the *Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ* [the Preserved Tablet], as in the saying of Allah,

﴿وَمَا مِنْ غَآئِبَةٍ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَٰبٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٥﴾﴾

"And there is nothing hidden in the heaven and the earth, but is in a Clear Record."[88]

Thus, the *Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ* is as its name suggests 'a record', so what the angel writes down on his scroll is in accordance to what is found within the *Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*. It is further preserved by the protection of Allah.

Allah then says,

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾﴾

"Verily: It is We who have sent down the Qur'an and surely, We will preserve it."[89]

Allah then continues and says,

87 *Al-Ḥijr*: 1

88 *Al-Naml*: 75

89 *Al-Ḥijr*: 9

﴿وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّٰهَا لِلنَّٰظِرِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحَفِظْنَٰهَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْطَٰنٍ رَّجِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾﴾

"And indeed, We have placed within the heaven great stars and have beautified it for the observers."[90]

Thus, the heavens are protected with stars which are shot at the devils.

Further on, Allah says,

﴿وَٱلْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَٰهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَٰسِيَ وَأَنۢبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُونٍ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

"As for the earth We have spread it out, set firm mountains on it, and made everything grow there in due balance."[91]

This points to the natural order which preserves life on earth; the balance of air, plants, herbivores and carnivores etc. Similarly, plants preserve breathing air by taking in carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

Allah then mentions the story of the creation of Adam and Iblīs,

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَٰنٌ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ ٱلْغَاوِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾﴾

"Satan said: 'O my Lord! Because you have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth and put them in wrong. All except Your

90 *Al-Ḥijr*: 16

91 *Al-Ḥijr*: 19

chosen servants among them.' (Allah) said: 'This is the Way which will lead straight to Me. Certainly, you will have no power over My servants, except over the ones who go astray and follow you.'"[92]

This refers to the protection of Allah for His believing servants from the misguidance of Satan.

Furthermore, Allah will preserve the love and friendship of the believers in Paradise,

﴿وَنَزَعۡنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنۡ غِلٍّ إِخۡوَٰنًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٖ مُّتَقَٰبِلِينَ ٤٧﴾

"And We shall remove any bitterness from their hearts: brothers, sitting on couches, face to face."[93]

This happiness will then be everlasting,

﴿وَمَا هُم مِّنۡهَا بِمُخۡرَجِينَ ٤٨﴾

"...nor will they ever be expelled."[94]

Allah has also protected the offspring of Ibrāhīm,

﴿إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَٰمٍ عَلِيمٖ ٥٣﴾

"We give you glad tidings of a son who will have great knowledge."[95]

Allah also preserved Lūṭ and his daughters,

92 *Al-Ḥijr*: 39-42.

93 *Al-Ḥijr*: 47.

94 *Al-Ḥijr*: 48

95 *Al-Ḥijr*: 53.

﴿وَٱتَّبِعۡ أَدۡبَٰرَهُمۡ﴾

"...and you walk behind them..."[96]

Moreover, Allah mentions the people of Thamūd by the name,

﴿أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡحِجۡرِ﴾

"the dwellers of *Al-Ḥijr* (the rocky tract)",[97]

for they would preserve and guard their water due to its scarcity.

Allah also protected His Prophet (ﷺ) from the evil of those who mocked him when he proclaimed the message,

﴿فَٱصۡدَعۡ بِمَا تُؤۡمَرُ وَأَعۡرِضۡ عَنِ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ ۝٩٤ إِنَّا كَفَيۡنَٰكَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَهۡزِءِينَ ۝٩٥﴾

"Therefore proclaim openly what you have been commanded, and ignore the idolaters. We are enough for you against all those who ridicule you."[98]

Thus, the theme of the *sūrah* is protection.

Sūrah Ṭā Hā

The sorcerers said after believing and prostrating,

96 *Al-Ḥijr*: 65.

97 *Al-Ḥijr*: 80.

98 *Al-Ḥijr*: 94-95

﴿قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَٰرُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ ٧٠﴾

"We believe in the Lord of Ḥārūn and Mūsā."[99]

This *sūrah* is unique in that the name of Ḥārūn precedes that of Mūsā, whereas in other *sūrahs* the name of Mūsā comes before Ḥārūn.

In *Sūrah al-A'rāf* and *al-Shu'arā'*, Allah says,

﴿رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ١٢٢﴾

"We believe in the Lord of Mūsā and Ḥārūn."[100]

Therefore, the meaning is that some of the sorcerers mentioned Mūsā's name first whereas others mentioned Hārūn's first.

It is well known that Mūsā is better than Ḥārūn and that Ḥārūn was given prophethood after Mūsā's request. Consequently, it should not be thought that Ḥārūn is better than Mūsā simply because his name comes first in *Sūrah Ṭā Hā*, for we see the name of Mūsā come before that of Ḥārūn in two other *sūrahs*, one before *Sūrah Ṭā Hā* and one after it. As such, it is wrong to think that Ḥārūn is better than Mūsā.

Why then does *Sūrah Ṭā Hā* begin with the name of Ḥārūn? It is important to research what Ḥārūn did in order to merit him being mentioned before Mūsā. In both *Sūrahs al-A'rāf* and *Ṭā Hā*, Allah mentions the part of the story where Ḥārūn is with the Children of Israel when they worshipped the calf.

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99 *Ṭā Hā*: 70.

100 *Al-A'rāf*: 122 and *Al-Shu'arā'*: 48.

In the first instance, in *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, Allah mentions the statement of Ḥārūn to Mūsā when the latter took hold of his hair and pulled him,

﴿قَالَ ٱبۡنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ ٱلۡقَوۡمَ ٱسۡتَضۡعَفُونِي وَكَادُواْ يَقۡتُلُونَنِي فَلَا تُشۡمِتۡ بِيَ ٱلۡأَعۡدَآءَ وَلَا تَجۡعَلۡنِي مَعَ ٱلۡقَوۡمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ١٥٠﴾

"O son of my mother! These people overpowered me! They almost killed me! Do not give my enemies reason to rejoice! Do not include me with these evildoers."[101]

Allah mentions the incident in general terms and does not detail what Ḥārūn said to his people and whether or not he rebuked them. Instead, the people overcame him and wanted to kill him, but why? Did they threaten him before he could rebuke them for worshipping the calf, 'If you speak we will kill you?' Or did he ignore them without making any attempt to rebuke? Or did they threaten him when they saw his face unhappy and the rebuke about to start? Or did he actually rebuke them and order the good? In *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, Allah does not mention any of the aforementioned things which Ḥārūn may have done.

However, in *Sūrah Ṭā Hā*, Allah clarifies this,

﴿وَلَقَدۡ قَالَ لَهُمۡ هَٰرُونُ مِن قَبۡلُ يَٰقَوۡمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنتُم بِهِۦۖ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنُ فَٱتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوٓاْ أَمۡرِي ٩٠﴾

"And Ḥārūn indeed had said to them beforehand: "O my people this is a test for you. Your true Lord is the Lord of Mercy, so follow me and obey my orders."[102]

Here, Allah mentions that Ḥārūn ordered the good, forbade the

101 *Al-A'rāf*: 150.

102 *Ṭā Hā*: 90.

evil and called them to *tawḥīd*, so Allah honoured his name in line with the principle mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an,

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ﴾

"And who is better in speech than he who invites to Allah..."[103]

This is also exemplified when we see the example of that particular animal, the dog, which would often be chased away and pelted, its saliva is ritually impure and it is forbidden to keep it except for a valid reason, yet still its mention was honoured when it accompanied those callers who ordered the good and forbade the evil, i.e. the people of the cave,

﴿وَكَلْبُهُم بَٰسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِٱلْوَصِيدِ﴾

"...and their dog stretching forth his two forelegs at the entrance..."[104]

If this is the case with the dog, then how about a prophet who calls his people to *tawḥīd*,

﴿وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى وَأَطِيعُوٓا۟ أَمْرِى ﴿٩٠﴾﴾

"Your true Lord is the Lord of Mercy, so follow me and obey my orders."[105]

He forbade them from evil,

103 *Fuṣṣilat*: 33

104 *Al-Kahf*: 18

105 *Ṭā Hā*: 90

﴿إِنَّمَا فُتِنتُم بِهِۦ﴾

"This is a test for you."[106]

Then, should Allah not honour him by mentioning him before Mūsā,

﴿قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَٰرُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ ٧٠﴾

"We believe in the Lord of Ḥārūn and Mūsā."[107]

It is also done in such a way that there is no doubt about the superiority of Mūsā, so *Sūrah Ṭā Hā* is unique in this regard. This is the theme of the *sūrah*; the various ways in which we can call to Allah. This is apparent throughout the *sūrah.*

Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt

This *sūrah* is unique in that it mentions the east (sunrise) without mentioning the west (sunset), as Allah says,

﴿رَبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَمَا بَيۡنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ ٱلۡمَشَٰرِقِ ٥﴾

"Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and everything between them, and Lord of every sunrise."[108]

Whereas in other chapters when the east is mentioned so too is

106 *Ṭā Hā*: 90

107 *Ṭā Hā*: 70

108 *Al-Ṣāffāt*: 5

the west, as in *Sūrah al-Raḥmān*,

﴿رَبُّ ٱلْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ ٱلْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾﴾

"(He is) the Lord of the two risings and the Lord of the two settings."[109]

Also, in *Sūrah al-Ma'ārij*,

﴿فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ ٱلْمَشَٰرِقِ وَٱلْمَغَٰرِبِ إِنَّا لَقَٰدِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾﴾

"By the Lord of every sunrise and sunset, We have the power."[110]

In *Sūrah Muzammil*,

﴿رَبُّ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ﴾

"The Lord of the east and the west, none has the right to be worshipped but He."[111]

In *Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt* the east is mentioned without the west. It has already preceded that the theme of this chapter is the status of the helpers of Allah, and that they are like the rising rays of the sun upon the earth, for it is through them that the hearts are enlightened and the paths to goodness are illuminated, and with them the earth shines bright.

Once the messengers, scholars and callers to goodness die, the earth will become dark, as Anas ibn Mālik said, "When the

109 *Al-Raḥmān*: 17.

110 *Al-Ma'ārij*: 40.

111 *Al-Muzzammil*: 9.

Prophet (ﷺ) entered Madinah, it became illuminated, and in turn, it illuminated everything else, and on the day the Prophet (ﷺ) died, Madinah became dark and everything else also darkened."[112]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, "The stars are the protectors of the heavens, and once they go, that which was promised to the heavens will take place. I am the protector of my companions, and once I go, that which was promised to my companions will take place. My companions are the protectors for my nation, and once they go, that which was promised to my nation will take place."[113]

112 Collected by Al-Tirmidhī in *Al-Shamā'il*.

113 Collected by Muslim.

Chapter Four

The Final Verses Found at the End of the Previous *Sūrah*

At times, a *sūrah* concludes with verses that summarise the theme of the following *sūrah*. An example of this is *Sūrah al-Furqān* which finishes with the saying of Allah,

﴿قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا۟ بِكُمْ رَبِّى لَوْلَا دُعَآؤُكُمْ ۖ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾﴾

"Say: 'What are you to my Lord without your supplication? But since you have written off the truth as lies, the inevitable will happen."[114]

This verse is saying that Allah pays no attention to the disbelievers, and that they are of no importance or value in His sight, irrespective of how high their worldly status reaches. Rather, Allah invites them to the religion so that they will have no excuse on the Day of Judgement. This is what Allah presents to them, even if their end will be one of destruction and punishment.

114 *Al-Furqān*: 77.

This is the theme of *Sūrah al-Shu'arā'* which follows on from *Sūrah al-Furqān*. The theme being the demise of great empires who were not saved by their greatness alone.

Take the example of the kingdom of Pharaoh who not only claimed divinity, but claimed that he was the one and only Lord. Such great kingdoms with their treasure, haughtiness and arrogance are all inconsequential to Allah when destroyed in a single moment,

﴿ثُمَّ أَغۡرَقۡنَا بَعۡدُ ٱلۡبَاقِينَ ١٢٠﴾

"Then We drowned the rest (disbelievers) thereafter."[115]

Such kingdoms then only become remnants.

No matter how great they may plan and plot - such as the plot of the greatest sorcerers living upon the face of the earth - then that too is destroyed. Just look at the magic of Pharaoh's sorcerers which vanished in an instant,

﴿فَأَلۡقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلۡقَفُ مَا يَأۡفِكُونَ ٤٥ فَأُلۡقِيَ ٱلسَّحَرَةُ سَٰجِدِينَ ٤٦ قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٤٧﴾

"Then Mūsā threw his stick, and behold, it swallowed up their trickery. And the sorcerers fell down in prostration, exclaiming, 'We believe in the Lord of the Worlds.'"[116]

Thus, Allah paid no heed to this great plot of theirs.

Furthermore, irrespective of how strong a bond of relationship or kinship is between a Muslim and disbeliever, such kinship will

115 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 120

116 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 45-47

be of no benefit, just as the kinship between Ibrāhīm and his father was of no benefit to his father. Allah paid no attention to such a relationship,

﴿وَلَا تُخۡزِنِي يَوۡمَ يُبۡعَثُونَ ٨٧﴾

"And disgrace me not on the Day when will be resurrected."[117]

Ibrāhīm will say on the Day of Judgement, 'O my Lord, you promised not to disgrace me on the Day of Resurrection, but what disgrace can be greater than the disgrace of my father?' Allah will say, 'I have prohibited Paradise for the disbelievers.' It will then be said, 'O Ibrāhīm, what is beneath your foot?' He will look and see a lizard which will be lifted by its legs and thrown into the Fire.'[118]

Allah gives no stock to the closest of relationships,

﴿فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَٰفِعِينَ ١٠٠ وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٖ ١٠١﴾

"Now we have no intercessors. Nor a close friend."[119]

Despite how great one's status and societal position may be, Allah pays no attention to it, just as with the high status of the disbelievers of the people of Nūḥ, who saw themselves as the nobility and elite, and saw the believers as unworthy,

﴿أَنُؤۡمِنُ لَكَ وَٱتَّبَعَكَ ٱلۡأَرۡذَلُونَ ١١١﴾

117 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 87

118 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*

119 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 100-101

"They said: "Shall we believe in you, when the worst sort of people follow you?"[120]

Such people have no worth in the sight of Allah,

﴿ثُمَّ أَغۡرَقۡنَا بَعۡدُ ٱلۡبَاقِينَ ١٢٠﴾

"Then We drowned the rest thereafter."[121]

The same goes for power and leadership, no matter how great and powerful a nation becomes, to the extent that no other country can oppose it, and it goes on to build military bases all over the world, it is of no benefit before Allah,

﴿أَتَبۡنُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ ءَايَةٗ تَعۡبَثُونَ ١٢٨﴾

"How can you be so vain that you set up monuments on every high place?"[122]

That nation went further and demanded taxes and loyalties from other countries, and punished those who refused to pay,

﴿وَإِذَا بَطَشۡتُم بَطَشۡتُمۡ جَبَّارِينَ ١٣٠﴾

"And when you seize, seize you as tyrants?"[123]

This great strength and power was destroyed in a day,

120 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 111

121 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 120

122 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 128

123 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 130

﴿فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ﴾

"They denounced him as a liar, and so We destroyed them."[124]

Allah paid no heed to them.

Other nations advanced in technology, industry and science,

﴿فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَارِهِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾﴾

"In gardens and springs. And fields, palm trees laden with fruit. Carving your houses out of mountains with great skill"[125]

Such advancement is of little consequence to Allah when such a nation turns away from Him,

﴿فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ﴾

"So the punishment fell upon them."[126]

They were destroyed with a single blow, and it was as if they never were, but all that remains are their traces and remnants,

﴿كَأَن لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا﴾

"As if they had never lived there."[127]

124 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 139
125 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 147-149
126 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 158
127 *Hūd*: 68

Allah pays no heed to them.

This is true even if the disbelievers are the indigenous members of that community, and the caller to goodness is a foreigner to that land, Allah places no importance on such things,

﴿قَالُوا۟ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ يَٰلُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿١٦٧﴾﴾

"They said: "If you do not stop this, O Lūṭ! Verily, you will be driven away!"[128]

One's station in front of Allah and His protection for them is not based on their origin or lineage. The evil doer is destroyed even if he is indigenous and the caller to good is saved even if he is a foreigner. Allah does not care about background if alongside that there is evil,

﴿ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا ٱلْـَٔاخَرِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَرًا ۖ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ ٱلْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾﴾

"Then We destroyed the others. And poured a rain of destruction down upon them. How dreadful that rain was for those who had been forewarned."[129]

At times, a country may be the most economically powerful, but its wealth is based on *ḥarām* income such as interest, unlawful insurance, gambling, stinginess and unlawful earnings,

﴿أَوْفُوا۟ ٱلْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلْمُخْسِرِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَزِنُوا۟ بِٱلْقِسْطَاسِ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا۟ ٱلنَّاسَ أَشْيَآءَهُمْ﴾

128 *Al-Shuʿarā'*: 167.

129 *Al-Shuʿarā'*: 172-173

"Give full measure, do not sell other short. Weigh with correct scales: Do not deprive people of what is theirs."[130]

Such a country which is economically powerful, but its wealth is from unlawful means is inconsequential to Allah,

﴿فَأَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ ٱلظُّلَّةِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٨٩﴾﴾

"They called him a liar, and so the torment of the Day of Shadow came upon them – it was the torment of a terrible day."[131]

If all of the above is true, then who does Allah care for? Allah cares for the pure and believing hearts, and the noblest of them is the messenger of Allah,

﴿نَزَلَ بِهِ ٱلرُّوحُ ٱلْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ﴾

"The Trustworthy Spirit has brought it down; to your heart..."[132]

Allah does not care for the evil hearts,

﴿كَذَٰلِكَ سَلَكْنَٰهُ فِى قُلُوبِ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾﴾

"So we make it pass straight through the hearts of the guilty."[133]

Thus Allah, with His greatness preserves the pure hearts from spiritual diseases, doubts and the devils,

130 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 181-183.

131 *Al-Shu'arā'*:189.

132 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 193-194.

133 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 200.

﴿وَمَا تَنَزَّلَتْ بِهِ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينُ ﴿٢١٠﴾ وَمَا يَنۢبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٢١١﴾﴾

"And it is not the devils who have brought it down. It is neither in their interests nor in their power."[134]

Therefore, you are the best of humankind, the leader of the children of Adam and the best of prophets, you are in Allah's sight with every movement and stillness,

﴿ٱلَّذِي يَرَىٰكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٢١٨﴾﴾

"Who sees you when you stand up [for prayer]."[135]

Rather, from the love and honour Allah has for you is that he also watches those whose tongues utter salutations upon you, from those who pray and prostrate,

﴿وَتَقَلُّبَكَ فِي ٱلسَّٰجِدِينَ ﴿٢١٩﴾﴾

"And sees your movement among those who fall prostrate."[136]

This verse refers to the uttering of your name upon the tongues of those who fall prostrate, for indeed He hears them and knows of them,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٢٠﴾﴾

134 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 210-211

135 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 218

136 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 219

"Verily! He, is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."[137]

He then rewards them and preserves them.

The honour of these people in the sight of Allah is an extension of your honour,

﴿وَٱخۡفِضۡ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ٢١٥﴾

"And lower your wing tenderly over the believers who follow you."[138]

These are the ones for whom Allah cares. Allah does not care for the eloquent despite how poetic they may be,

﴿وَٱلشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ ٱلۡغَاوُۥنَ ٢٢٤﴾

"Only those who are lost in error follow the poets."[139]

Thus, the final verses of *Sūrah al-Furqān* summarise this chapter,

﴿قُلۡ مَا يَعۡبَؤُاْ بِكُمۡ رَبِّي لَوۡلَا دُعَآؤُكُمۡۖ فَقَدۡ كَذَّبۡتُمۡ فَسَوۡفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامٗا ٧٧﴾

"Say: 'What are you to my Lord without your supplication? But since you have written off the truth as lies, the inevitable will happen."[140]

137 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 220
138 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 215
139 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 224
140 *Al-Furqān*: 77

Chapter Five
The Name of the *Sūrah*

Sometimes, that which can help you to ascertain the theme of a *sūrah* is the name itself. The following are examples of this:

Sūrah al-Ḥijr

The people of the *Ḥijr* are the nation of Thamūd. They were given this name as a result of the scarce amount of water they had where they resided. The root word, '*thamad*' refers to a small or scarce amount. They resided in this area and would prevent others from taking the water, instead preserving and cordoning it off for themselves. Due to the scarce amount of water they had, they would take turns to drink from it with the she-camel that was sent as a miracle to them; drinking from it one day, and letting the she-camel drink from it the next day,

﴿وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُّحْتَضَرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾﴾

"Tell them the water is to be shared between them: each one should drink in turn."[141]

Allah also says,

﴿لَّهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿١٥٥﴾﴾

"...She should have her turn to drink and so should you, each on a specified day."[142]

Thus, they would ration their own use of the water and prevent others from using it. This meaning is compatible with the theme of the *sūrah* which is protection and preservation, as previously mentioned.

Sūrah al-Mu'minūn

This *sūrah* speaks about the success of the believers, as aforementioned.

Sūrah al-Nūr

How does a Muslim receive divine light and guidance? This is the theme of this chapter.

141 *Al-Qamar*: 28.

142 *Al-Shu'arā'*: 155

Such divine light is achieved through chastity, modesty and avoiding everything which can lead to fornication. This is why the *sūrah* begins with the prohibition of fornication and its punishment,

﴿ٱلزَّانِيَةُ وَٱلزَّانِي فَٱجۡلِدُواْ كُلَّ وَٰحِدٖ مِّنۡهُمَا مِاْئَةَ جَلۡدَةٖۖ﴾

"The [unmarried] woman and the [unmarried] man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred lashes."[143]

The *sūrah* then continues by mentioning the prohibition of slander and prescribing its punishment, as one of the primary reasons for the spread of immorality is the occurence of slandering innocent women, i.e. speaking about their honour which then results in the spread of rumours about them. This then leads to fornication being spoken of freely and practised, people's honour being besmirched and thinking evil of others to the extent that there doubts emerge about people's parentage. The net result is the same evil consequences as fornication itself. This is why the punishment of slander is similar to that of fornication,

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ يَرۡمُونَ ٱلۡمُحۡصَنَٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمۡ يَأۡتُواْ بِأَرۡبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَٱجۡلِدُوهُمۡ ثَمَٰنِينَ جَلۡدَةٗ﴾

"And those who accuse chaste women of fornication, and then fail to produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty lashes..."[144]

The greatest slander was the one levied at the mothers of the believers,

143 *Al-Nūr*: 2.

144 *Al-Nūr*: 4.

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ جَآءُو بِٱلْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ﴾

"Verily! It was a group among you that concocted the lie..."[145]

This evil speech results in the spread of evil,

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةُ فِى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ﴾

"Verily, a painful punishment waits in this world and the next for those who like indecency to spread among the believers."[146]

Then also avoid something lesser in evil than this, which is entering into the homes of others without permission,

﴿لَا تَدْخُلُوا۟ بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَسْتَأْنِسُوا۟ وَتُسَلِّمُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهَا﴾

"Do not enter other people's houses until you have asked permission to do so and greeted those inside."[147]

This is so that you do not inadvertently see their private affairs, which will in turn lead to offending people and more evil becoming widespread, and refuge is sought in Allah.

Furthermore, avoid allowing your gaze to wander,

﴿قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا۟ مِنْ أَبْصَٰرِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا۟ فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ﴾

"Tell the believing men to lower their glances, and guard their private

145 *Al-Nūr*: 11.

146 *Al-Nūr*: 19.

147 *Al-Nūr*: 27.

parts. That is purer for them."[148]

﴿وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَٰرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ﴾

"And tell the believing women to lower their glances, and guard their private parts."[149]

This is because a single glance can be the gateway to fornication. Also, something which stirs a man's sexual desire is immodest clothing, so a woman is ordered to avoid this,

﴿وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا﴾

"...and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent..."[150]

Nor should they draw attention to themselves by stamping their feet,

﴿وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّ﴾

"And let them not stamp their feet so as to draw attention to their hidden adornments."[151]

Beyond this, efforts should be made to marry off young men and women so that they may guard their modesty except from their spouses and safeguard themselves from falling into fornication,

148 *Al-Nūr*: 30.

149 *Al-Nūr*: 31.

150 *Al-Nūr*: 31.

151 *Al-Nūr*: 31.

﴿وَأَنكِحُوا۟ ٱلْأَيَـٰمَىٰ مِنكُمْ وَٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَآئِكُمْ﴾

"And marry off the single among you and those of your male and female slaves who are fit [for marriage]."[152]

As for those who cannot marry, they should guard their modesty through other means such as fasting, supplication and so on,

﴿وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُغْنِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِۦ﴾

"Those who are unable to marry should keep chaste until Allah gives them enough of His bounty."[153]

If all of the above is achieved, then Allah will guarantee divine light for His servant,

﴿ٱللَّهُ نُورُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ مَثَلُ نُورِهِۦ كَمِشْكَوٰةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ﴾

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as a niche and within it a lamp."[154]

In order to preserve such a light, then a person should regularly attend the mosque, remember Allah and seek His aid,

﴿فِى بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ ٱللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُۥ فِيهَا بِٱلْغُدُوِّ وَٱلْـَٔاصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾ رِجَالٌ﴾

"In houses of worship, Allah has ordained that they be raised high

152 *Al-Nūr*: 32

153 *Al-Nūr*: 33

154 *Al-Nūr*:35

and that His name be remembered in them, His glory celebrated morning and evening. By men..."[155]

The alternative to this divine light is for a person to follow his whims and desires, lusting after women thinking that this will fill his longing for love and desire. Instead he will taste different forms of punishment at the hands of those he thinks he loves, and he will only increase in his longing for love until he meets Allah in that state,

﴿كَسَرَابٍۭ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ ٱلظَّمْـَٔانُ مَآءً حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَهُۥ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْـًٔا وَوَجَدَ ٱللَّهَ عِندَهُۥ﴾

"...their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water, until he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing, but he finds Allah who pays him his account in full..."[156]

He sees the world in front of him dark and black, and falls flat on his face in loss and despair,

﴿ظُلُمَٰتٌۢ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ﴾

"...with clouds above – layer upon layer of darkness..."[157]

Know, may Allah have mercy upon you, that divine light comes from Allah alone. He bestows it upon whomsoever He deems worthy from His slaves,

﴿وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ ٱللَّهُ لَهُۥ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُۥ مِن نُّورٍ ۝٤٠﴾

155 *Al-Nūr*: 36-37

156 *Al-Nūr*: 39

157 *Al-Nūr*: 40

"The one to whom Allah gives no light has no light at all."[158]

Just as water is the source of life for the bodies which are created from it, and all creatures have a varying degree of it, then likewise divine light is the source of life for the hearts. Just as people differ in their bodies despite all having been created from water, then likewise the aspirations of the hearts also differ. Some hearts only live to fulfil the carnal needs of their stomachs or private parts and others have far more noble aspirations. The latter are people whose minds and heads are nobler, and their first and main priority is not their stomach or private parts. Yet other people are in between these two states,

﴿وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِّن مَّآءٍ ۖ فَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهِۦ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰٓ أَرْبَعٍ ۚ يَخْلُقُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ﴾

"Allah has created every moving creature from water: some of them crawl on their bellies, some walk on two legs, and some on four. Allah creates whatever He will."[159]

In order to attain this divine light, you must observe and adhere to the rulings and principles which have been legislated which guard modesty. Do not be from among those people who turn away when the rulings of the *sharī'ah* forbid them from unlawful desires and lusts, forging unlawful relations with the opposite gender, obligate upon them the lowering of the gaze, enjoin the prohibition of immodesty and slander and prescribe the punishment for fornication.

The irony is that the person who turns away from these rulings is the same individual, who if they were to see another person lusting after their own daughter, sister or wife, they would ask for

158 *Al-Nūr*: 40.

159 *Al-Nūr*: 45.

the implementation of the *sharī'ah* and become emotional,

﴿وَإِذَا دُعُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ لِيَحۡكُمَ بَيۡنَهُمۡ إِذَا فَرِيقٞ مِّنۡهُم مُّعۡرِضُونَ ٤٨ وَإِن يَكُن لَّهُمُ ٱلۡحَقُّ يَأۡتُوٓاْ إِلَيۡهِ مُذۡعِنِينَ ٤٩﴾

"And when they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger in order for him to judge between them, some of them turn away. If they were claiming their right, they would come willingly."[160]

So if you don't fit the description of these unfortunate people, then have glad tidings of success and steadfastness in this life and the next,

﴿وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمۡ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسۡتَخۡلِفَنَّهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ كَمَا ٱسۡتَخۡلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِهِمۡ﴾

"Allah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession in the earth, as He granted it to those before them..."[161]

From Allah's mercy upon you is that He has made certain exceptions which can be used to remove difficulty:

Firstly: The allowance to possess slaves.

Secondly: Those who are under the age of maturity must only seek permission in three instances,

﴿لِيَسۡتَـٔۡذِنكُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ مَلَكَتۡ أَيۡمَٰنُكُمۡ وَٱلَّذِينَ لَمۡ يَبۡلُغُواْ ٱلۡحُلُمَ مِنكُمۡ ثَلَٰثَ مَرَّٰتٖ﴾

"Let your legal slaves and any who have not yet reached puberty ask

160 *Al-Nūr*: 48-49.

161 *Al-Nūr*: 55.

your permission on three occasions..."[162]

Thirdly: The woman who has reached the age where she no longer desires marriage can at times remove her outer covering in the presence of non-relatives,

﴿وَٱلْقَوَٰعِدُ مِنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ٱلَّٰتِى لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَن يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَٰتٍۭ بِزِينَةٍ﴾

"No blame will be attached to elderly women who are not hoping for marriage, if they take off their outer garments without flaunting their charms..."[163]

Fourthly: The blind, lame and sick are not to be blamed in situations where their private areas become unintentionally exposed due to their situations,

﴿لَّيْسَ عَلَى ٱلْأَعْمَىٰ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ﴾

"No blame will be attached to the blind, the lame, the sick..."[164]

Likewise, it is allowed to eat from the houses of one's parents, siblings, paternal or maternal uncles and friends without seeking prior permission,

﴿وَلَا عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَن تَأْكُلُوا۟ مِنۢ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ ءَابَآئِكُمْ﴾

"...nor [is there blame] on yourselves, if you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers..."[165]

162 *Al-Nūr*: 58.

163 *Al-Nūr*: 60.

164 *Al-Nūr*: 61.

165 *Al-Nūr*: 61.

Know, that preserving one's honour and modesty is achieved by acts of obedience, not by turning away from Allah and His messenger, abandoning righteous deeds such as *jihād* and *ḥajj*, but rather by performing good deeds with the intention of protecting the privacy of our household affairs,

﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَإِذَا كَانُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ عَلَىٰٓ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَـْٔذِنُوهُ﴾

"...the true believers are only those, who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on some common matter, do not depart until they have asked his permission."[166]

The more you preserve the rights of Allah, the more He will preserve your privacy and honour, as He owns the heavens and the earth, as He says,

﴿أَلَآ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَآ أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ﴾

"Certainly, everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. Surely, He knows what state you are in..."[167]

166 *Al-Nūr*: 62.

167 *Al-Nūr*: 64.

Chapter Six
The Theme of the *Sūrah* is Clear

At times, the theme of the *sūrah* is clear and apparent, which makes it easy to connect it to the goals and objectives of the *sharī'ah*.

An example of this is *Sūrah Yūsuf*.

Its theme is clearly about love, and how hearts are connected to their beloved. From the signs that clearly show that this is the theme, is the inherent love every Muslim possesses for the recitation of this *sūrah*, irrespective of whether that Muslim is righteous or not. This is due to the events mentioned in the story, all of which revolve around the theme of love. The *sūrah* also discusses the connection of the hearts to the Most Beloved, and that is the true God who alone is worthy of worship, the Creator, as it is through this connection one finds happiness and success. This is why it is called the best of stories.

The first stage of this love comes from humbleness and submission to the beloved,

﴿إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ۝٤﴾

"Verily, I dreamed of eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating before me."[168]

It was allowed in the *sharīʿah* of the Children of Israel to prostrate to others out of respect and honour.

Furthermore, one must protect the secret bond between himself and his beloved so that others do not become jealous of it, which then results in that sweetness being lost,

﴿لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَىٰٓ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا۟ لَكَ كَيْدًا﴾

"Tell your brothers nothing of this dream, or they may plot to harm you."[169]

It also speaks of the grieving of the heart when its beloved is lost,

﴿إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِيٓ أَن تَذْهَبُوا۟﴾

"The thought of you taking him away with you worries me."[170]

And the fear one has towards what may happen to his beloved,

﴿وَأَخَافُ أَن يَأْكُلَهُ ٱلذِّئْبُ وَأَنتُمْ عَنْهُ غَٰفِلُونَ ۝١٣﴾

168 *Yūsuf*: 4

169 *Yūsuf*: 5

170 *Yūsuf*: 13

"I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware."[171]

This then came true when they said,

﴿فَأَكَلَهُ ٱلذِّئْبُ﴾

"...and a wolf devoured him."[172]

The *sūrah* also speaks of the repeated attempts and plans one hatches to reach their beloved,

﴿وَرَٰوَدَتْهُ ٱلَّتِى هُوَ فِى بَيْتِهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِۦ﴾

"The woman in whose house he was living tried to seduce him..."[173]

Then we see how some people will prepare and beautify themselves for their beloved, and throw themselves before that person and sacrifice the best of what they possess,

﴿وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ﴾

"She said: 'Come to me.'"[174]

However, one should remember the favours of others upon them and not repay that with treachery,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ رَبِّىٓ أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَاىَ﴾

171 *Yūsuf*: 13
172 *Yūsuf*: 17
173 *Yūsuf*: 23
174 *Yūsuf*: 23

"My master has been good to me."[175]

The one who loves someone else may make a mistake towards their beloved despite all attempts at being loving and gentle,

﴿إِلَّآ أَن يُسۡجَنَ أَوۡ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ٢٥﴾

"...except that he be put in prison or a painful torment?"[176]

She delayed the punishment. This harshness was so that he may reflect and change his mind,

﴿وَلَئِن لَّمۡ يَفۡعَلۡ مَآ ءَامُرُهُۥ لَيُسۡجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونٗا مِّنَ ٱلصَّٰغِرِينَ ٣٢﴾

"but if he does not do what I command now, he will be put in prison and degraded."[177]

The greatest honour is to be announced openly and publicly as the most beloved person to someone,

﴿وَقَالَ نِسۡوَةٞ فِي ٱلۡمَدِينَةِ ٱمۡرَأَتُ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ تُرَٰوِدُ فَتَىٰهَا عَن نَّفۡسِهِۦۖ قَدۡ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّاۖ﴾

"And women in the city said: 'The governor's wife is trying to seduce her slave! Love for him consumes her heart."[178]

This is why the most beloved of names to Allah is, 'Abdullāh, and the greatest description given to the most noble of prophets is 'messengers of Allah', and the best of them, the Prophet (ﷺ) is 'the

175 *Yūsuf*: 23.

176 *Yūsuf*: 25.

177 *Yūsuf*: 32.

178 *Yūsuf*: 30.

close of friend of Allah' as he said, "As for your companion, then he is the close of friend of the Most Beneficent."[179]

The perfection of this type of bond is realised by its on-going nature to reach the beloved despite his refusal to accept,

﴿ٱمۡرَأَتُ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ تُرَٰوِدُ فَتَىٰهَا عَن نَّفۡسِهِۦ﴾

"The governor's wife is trying to seduce her slave..."[180]

The most complete type of love is one which fully engulfs the heart,

﴿قَدۡ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا﴾

"...Love for him consumer her heart."[181]

Furthermore, one does not care what it takes in order to attain the pleasure of their beloved, rather they do this with pride,

﴿وَلَقَدۡ رَٰوَدتُّهُۥ عَن نَّفۡسِهِۦ فَٱسۡتَعۡصَمَ﴾

"...and I did seek to seduce him, but he refused."[182]

Furthermore, they make this bond apparent to the world,

﴿فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتۡ بِمَكۡرِهِنَّ أَرۡسَلَتۡ إِلَيۡهِنَّ﴾

179 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.*

180 *Yūsuf*: 30.

181 *Yūsuf*: 30.

182 *Yūsuf*: 32.

"When she heard their malicious talk, she sent for them..."[183]

The beauty of the beloved is one of the foremost reasons for attachment,

﴿فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُۥٓ أَكْبَرْنَهُۥ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَٰشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَٰذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾﴾

"Then, when they saw him, they were stunned by his beauty, and cut their hands, exclaiming, 'Great God! He cannot be mortal! He must be a precious angel.'"[184]

The beauty of Allah is far greater. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Indeed, Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty."[185]

To remember the one who is loved at all times and express that love, even if not explicitly, is what Ya'qūb did when they asked him to send Binyāmīn. Instead, Ya'qūb remembered Yūsuf,

﴿هَلْ ءَامَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَآ أَمِنتُكُمْ عَلَىٰٓ أَخِيهِ مِن قَبْلُ﴾

"Am I to entrust him to you as I did his brother before?"[186]

Every incident, even if it is major, is a reminder of the beloved. That is why when Ya'qūb was informed that Binyāmīn was taken captive, he remembered Yūsuf saying,

﴿يَٰٓأَسَفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ﴾

183 *Yūsuf*: 31

184 *Yūsuf*: 31

185 Collected by Muslim

186 *Yūsuf*: 64

"Alas, my grief for Yūsuf!"[187]

Then, one becomes preoccupied with their love for the most beloved over and above their love for others, as Ya'qūb became preoccupied with Yūsuf over Binyāmīn. This grief for the beloved is severe,

﴿وَٱبۡيَضَّتۡ عَيۡنَاهُ مِنَ ٱلۡحُزۡنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٞ ٨٤﴾

"His eyes went white with grief and he was filled with sorrow."[188]

Despite how expensive or great the price to pay may be for the beloved, in reality it is small and insignificant. This is why only the governor of Egypt could afford to buy Yūsuf because of his price. It is even said that he was sold for his weight in coins. Yet, Allah still says,

﴿وَشَرَوۡهُ بِثَمَنِۭ بَخۡسٖ دَرَاهِمَ مَعۡدُودَةٖ﴾

"And they sold him for a small price, - for a few Dirhams."[189]

The word 'a few' is a plural which denotes many. Likewise, when speaking with the beloved, one must show respect and choose the best of words,

﴿هَٰذَا تَأۡوِيلُ رُءۡيَايَ مِن قَبۡلُ قَدۡ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقّٗاۖ وَقَدۡ أَحۡسَنَ بِيٓ إِذۡ أَخۡرَجَنِي مِنَ ٱلسِّجۡنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُم مِّنَ ٱلۡبَدۡوِ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ أَن نَّزَغَ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ بَيۡنِي وَبَيۡنَ إِخۡوَتِيٓۚ﴾

"This is the explanation of my dream before! My Lord has made it come true! He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison,

187 *Yūsuf*: 84
188 *Yūsuf*: 84
189 *Yūsuf*: 20

and brought you from Bedouin life after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers."[190]

Thus, he did not say that he had to endure many hardships in order for his dream to be fulfilled or that it was decreed for him to be imprisoned. Rather, he mentions the blessing in all of this,

﴿أَخۡرَجَنِي مِنَ ٱلسِّجۡنِ﴾

"...when He took me out of the prison..."[191]

Similarly, he does not say that Allah separated us when I was taken to Egypt, but instead chooses to focus on,

﴿وَجَآءَ بِكُم مِّنَ ٱلۡبَدۡوِ﴾

"... and brought you from Bedouin life..."[192]

Thus, He has brought us together in this city in comfort and happiness, and all evil is attributed to Satan,

﴿مِنۢ بَعۡدِ أَن نَّزَغَ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ بَيۡنِي وَبَيۡنَ إِخۡوَتِيٓۚ﴾

"after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers."[193]

Then, when there is complete joy and perfect happiness in meeting the closest and most beloved of people, there also occurs in the heart a love to meet and be alone with the most beloved of

190 *Yūsuf*: 100

191 *Yūsuf*: 100

192 *Yūsuf*: 100

193 *Yūsuf*: 100

all in existence to him, and that is Allah, the Most High. For this reason, when his parents and brothers met with Yūsuf after years of separation, Yūsuf moved slightly away and secluded himself with Allah, saying,

﴿رَبِّ قَدْ ءَاتَيْتَنِي مِنَ ٱلْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِن تَأْوِيلِ ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَنتَ وَلِيِّۦ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ﴾

"My Lord! You have given me authority; You have taught me something about the interpretation of dreams; Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter."[194]

Then his heart yearned to meet Allah,

﴿تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾﴾

"...cause me to die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous."[195]

However, most people are distanced from these feelings of love and bonding between Allah and His slaves,

﴿وَمَآ أَكْثَرُ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾﴾

"However eagerly you may want them to, most me will not believe."[196]

Even if they love Allah, then it is a love which is tainted with others things,

194 *Yūsuf*: 101

195 *Yūsuf*: 101

196 *Yūsuf*: 103

﴿وَمَا يُؤۡمِنُ أَكۡثَرُهُم بِٱللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُم مُّشۡرِكُونَ ١٠٦﴾

"And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners unto Him."[197]

Thus, it becomes clear that the theme of the *sūrah* is how the hearts connect to their most beloved, Allah, the Most High.

Allah knows best. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His slave and Messenger, Muḥammad, and all praise is due to Allah, Lord of all that exists.

197 *Yūsuf*: 106

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